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CANBERRA ACT 2601

FIELD NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA INC.

FIELD NATURALIST

MEETING—THURSDAY 3 July 2014
7:30 pm Australian National University
Gould Seminar Room, Building 116, Daley Road, ANU, ACT
details back page

Fairness and Justice in Environmental Decision Making

Speaker: Catherine Gross

Fairness and Justice in Environmental Decision Making - water under the bridge is the title of a book written by our speaker Dr Catherine Gross who is Vice-Chair of the Frank Fenner Foundation, an organisation based in Canberra, which aims to promote scientific understanding of the human situation in the biosphere. Catherine will talk about fairness and then conduct a general discussion. Her new Frank Fenner Foundation project will also be mentioned.

Her book, by crossing disciplinary boundaries, 'uniquely connects theories of justice with people's lived experience within social conflicts over resource sharing. It shows why some conflicts, such as local opposition to wind farms and water disputes, have become intractable social problems in many countries of the world. It shows the power of injustice in generating opposition to decisions and answers the question: why are the results of many government initiatives and policies not accepted by those affected? Focusing on two social conflicts over water sharing in Australia to show why fairness and justice are important in decision-making,' Catherine 'shows how these conflicts are typical of water sharing and other natural resource conflicts experienced in many countries around the world, particularly in the context of climate change'.

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Winter is upon us

Alison Milton

Autumn this year has been unseasonably warm. Almost one month into Winter and I still have not uprooted my last tomato, capsicum and chilli plants. I have azaleas in flower, am still picking the odd raspberry and even have a strawberry or two trying to mature, though under shelter. It has been warm enough to enjoy the garden and watch the wrens and silver eyes visiting the birdbath.

With this unseasonal warm weather has come the question; when do I start to prune my roses?

Fear not; now near the end of June, Winter has finally decided to announce it's annual visit with gusto. Yes, those cold biting winds signalling snow in the high regions, no doubt, much to the relief and delight of the snow resorts.

So what does Winter mean to the field naturalist? Sitting inside rugged up huddled in front of the heater or fireplace. Not at all.

Any long term resident of Canberra knows that a good frost is our friend. I recently heard from a colleague who grew up on a farm that she was not allowed to pick the citrus fruit until the first good frost (which supposedly sweetened the fruit). But aside from that, a frost usually means clear skies with often quite warm temperatures during the day once the early chill has passed. Ideal for excursions into the outdoors whether it be to local reserves or venturing further afield. Many bushwalkers prefer only to walk in the cooler months.

There are still many birds to observe and even flora and fungi. In fact it has been in June the last two years that I have found the presence of *Amanita muscaria* near the lake behind the Hyatt Hotel.

The pair of Superb Fairy Wrens can still be observed in my backyard and in the surrounding streets. Whether these are the same pair making their rounds or several pair is undetermined, but I suspect the former.

But of course, not all days are so welcome. There are still days like the current week where rain and fierce winds make the days cold and miserable; more suited to staying indoors rugged up with a good book rather than braving the elements.

For these days Rosemary Brening has come up with a list of books in which you might like to indulge on these not so pleasant days, when even the birds seek shelter from the elements.



Winter reading: Some books that continue to inspire and reward the curious whatever the weather

These reviews were drawn together when winds blew and rain squalled through the region relentlessly for the whole day. The aims of the selection is to show that the authors bring the naturalist's approach and spirituality to their underlying messages. We are truly blessed if we also retain a sense of curiosity and wonder for then we appreciate the gift that being surrounded and nurtured by nature represents.

Treading Lightly: the Hidden Wisdom of the World's oldest people: 2006

"Karl-Erik Sveiby and Tex Skuthorpe show how traditional Aboriginal stories and paintings were used to convey knowledge from one generation to the next, about the environment, law and relationships. They reveal the hidden art of four-level storytelling, and discuss how the stories, and the

way they were used formed the basis for a sustainable society. They explain ecological farming methods, and how the Aboriginal style of leadership created resilient societies". The 262 page book's blurb quote shows how their book links strongly through story and art with the work of Scott Cane's ABC series and Bill Gammage's book.

First Footprints: The Epic Story of the First Australians: 2013: Australia

Based on the ABC TV Series, archaeologist and anthropologist Scott Cane's book traces the origins and arrivals of the First Australians in the context of the 40–60,000 year history of human presence throughout the continent. The 316 page book is worth it for the bringing together of rock art photographs, the mega-fauna reconstructions, historic and scenic records. References are comprehensive and include names we know; Flood, Mulvaney, Horton, Berndt, Tindale.

Wildwood: A Journey Through Trees: 2007: UK

Roger Deakin takes readers on a 388 page journey exploring specific trees, timbers, forests, woods and the great range of uses humans find for "*the element wood, as it exists in nature, in our souls, in our culture and our lives.*" It's a "*lyrical and literate read*" with historical insights blended with autobiography, the traveller's tale and the endless curiosity of the naturalist. He spends some time in The Pilliga, Utopia, Alice, and Bendigo after explorations in England the USA and before seeking Walnut forests in remote Asian communities.

Life in the Soil: A Guide for Naturalists and Gardeners: 2007: USA

James B Nardi is "*a biologist ...who gardens with the help of innumerable soil creatures*". In 293 pages he brings together the origins of soil, the links between rocks, weather and the

well-explained lives of plants as they interact with and depend on soil. The organisms of the soil's communities are described readably and in detail. Each creature features in drawings and diagrams with many of their roles underground being included in the text via personal observations.

I Love Dirt! 52 activities to help you & your kids discover the wonders of nature 2008: USA

Seasonally arranged this 150 page book links children with nature by suggesting activities and exploring what the outdoors can reveal to observant and curious people. Each 1–3 page chapter has a fact-box that summarises what can be learnt whilst enjoying creating, watching and engaging the senses. I'd quibble over the title in that calling soil dirt does little for the image of such an essential medium until some of the activities are tried with a carer's guidance.

Last Child in the Woods: Saving our children from Nature-Deficit Disorder: 2005: USA

Richard Louv wrote the Foreword to *I love dirt!*, showing in his own 383 page book why there is such a pressing need to bring children and other people back to closeness to nature. Even though it's a thick volume it's eminently readable in presenting how that closeness aids development, stimulates creativity, curiosity, problem-solving skills, wellbeing and builds the habit of being observant. The traps presented by modern lifestyles and the pressures of conformity, fears and skewed educational expectations are explained. Naturalists have innately been practising involvement with nature for decades. Louv explains why a catalytic change is necessary for people and their environments.

The Forgiveness of Nature: The Story of Grass: 2001: UK

The odd title of Graham Harvey's 371 volume on the age-old history of grass and grasses

belies a fascinating collection of stories related to this vital group of 'monocots'. The plains, high-country pastures, native grasslands, fens and meadows all feature, explained and placed in historical contexts. Add the influences of farmers, graziers, grounds-staff, shepherds, nomads, artificial fertilisers, mowers, agricultural 'experts' and urban life and the essential resilience and nature of grass comes alive again after its long journey through civilisations' influences.

Weeds: The Story of Outlaw Plants: 2012: UK

Richard Mabey provides a 322 page cultural history of weeds "*weaving together the insights of botanists, gardeners, artists and poets with his own life-long fascination*". Mabey says "*Plants become weeds when they obstruct our plans, or our tidy maps of the world*" as he begins his explanation of his journey to discover the origins of our attitudes to weeds and the specific histories of scores of triffid-like, invasive, intriguing and evocative rogue plants. There's a garden near Central Park devoted to all the plants featured in Shakespeare's plays. The poppies of Flanders Fields rate mention as well as species farmers took with them on their migrations across the globe, particularly from the Mediterranean.

The Weed Forager's Handbook: A Guide to edible and medicinal weeds in Australia: 2013: Australia

Adam Grubb and Annie Raser-Rowland's pocket-sized but copiously illustrated guide light-heartedly describes the numerous benefits and few pitfalls of most of the common weeds of southern Australian gardens. Many of the plants are more nutritious than the species we buy for salad and as vegetables; in other words weeds are often under-appreciated and out-of-fashion plants that have been

part of civilisations from time immemorial. It's one of the most attractive and useful 'dictionaries' around with 166 pages of identification and factual information.

**The Global Forest: 40 Ways trees can save us: 2010: US
2011: UK**

Diana Beresford-Kroeger's essays bring a poetic approach to trees based on her wide-ranging knowledge of how trees chemically affect our environment. The essays span mythology, horticulture, spirituality, science and alternative medicine and are woven together with a strong understanding of ecology. Importantly she shows the essence of understanding that other organisms and other species are of immeasurable value for themselves as well as their usefulness to dependent humans. Often there are links to issues such as climate change, farming methods, pollution, animals foraging choices, ecosystem services and artistic creativity.

The Killing of the Countryside: 1997: UK

Graham Harvey's 218 page book describes the beauty, integrity, biodiversity and unquantifiable

value of the British countryside's meadows and hillsides; the equivalent of Australia's native grasslands, rangelands and shrublands. Post-war and later industrial-scale farming methods, government policies and subsidy systems have destroyed these treasures, their wildlife diversity and the opportunity for communities to have access to healthy and nutritious foods based on natural systems. There are strong moves towards bio-logical and organic farming to bring hope of a natural future and restore populations of native plants and animals.

The Whole Hog: Exploring the Extraordinary Potential of Pigs: 2004: UK

Reaktion Books has a fascinating series where each copiously illustrated book features the cultural, biological, cultural and historical of a different animal. There is one entitled *Pig* but Lyall Watson's 277 pages help readers investigate the variations between African, American, Eurasian, Island and Domesticated pigs. Pigs are gregarious, playful, resourceful, caring, social and appealing animals once details, anecdotes and scientific observations emerge. They do not deserve the taboos

and superstitions that have tainted their reputations for centuries. They are also capable of clever adaptation to the environments in which they are established as shown by what we've seen of feral pigs in Australia.

Let the Land Speak A history of Australia: How the land created a nation. 2013 Australia

Jackie French brings Australian history to life and under a different spotlight by commenting on how the land itself shaped the events that created the modern Australia. In 440 pages and concluding with 24 Predictions she explains, for example, that Indigenous women effected change in their landscapes, how droughts, the land's flora and fauna created resilient people in ancient times as well as in the colonial era. She often uses experiences from her home valley in Araluen to illustrate the point "*To understand Australia's history, you need to look at how the land has shaped not just our past, but will continue to shape our future*".

Rosemary Blemings

What can you do to help the field naturalists?

Our AGM is on 7 August. All positions will be declared vacant. Would you like to be on the committee? How can you help to keep the Field Nats functioning? Here is a list of things that we do, you may think of more but please be prepared to carry them out.

Find speakers, arrange dates, draw up the yearly program, keep in touch with speakers.

Advertise each month in the Chronicle, (Canberra Times less successful but try), email to BEEG (Biology, Environment, Ecology, Genetics), the Fenner School and any like-minded group or individual.

Manage the finances, remind when subscriptions are due.

Be the Supper person – bring the equipment each meeting, set up and take home.

Keep the raffle rolling along.

Represent FNAC at the Conservation Council's meetings. Read and advise on policy.

Organise and participate in outings.

Write articles for the Newsletter.

Manage the website (in obedience, President takes responsibility).

What do you enjoy doing? Please think of your possibilities within the Field Nats.

Rosemary von Behrens

Notice of annual general meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO ALL MEMBERS THAT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Field Naturalists Association of Canberra will be held on Thursday 7th AUGUST 2014 at 7.30 pm in the Seminar Room, Building 116, Gould Wing, Daley Road, ANU.

Business:

- a. To confirm the minutes of the last preceding annual general meeting.
- b. To receive from the committee, auditor, and servants of the Association reports upon the transactions of the Association during the last preceding financial year.
- c. To elect the officers of the Association (President; Vice President; Treasurer; Secretary) and the ordinary committee members
- d. To appoint the auditor and determine his/her remuneration
- e. To conduct other business of which notice has been given

Nominations for election of members of Committee shall be made in writing (see below) and shall be delivered to an officer of the Association by Tuesday July 29th. If insufficient nominations are received to fill all vacancies on the committee, the candidates shall be deemed to be elected and further nominations shall be received at the Annual General Meeting.

NOMINATION FORM

I hereby nominate _____

BLOCK LETTERS

A member of the Field Naturalists Association of Canberra Inc

For the position of _____

Name of Proposer _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Name of Seconder _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Acceptance of Nomination

I _____ accept nomination for _____

Signature of Nominee _____ Dated _____

Month	Speaker	Topic
3 July	Dr Catherine Gross	Fairness and Justice in Decision making
7 August	AGM Adrienne, Cecelia, David	Cecelia on Kamchatka David on Tassie Shells
4 September	Dr Adam Slipinski	Beetles
2 October	Ken Hodgkinson	Grasslands and their care
6 November	Danswell Starrs	Freshwater fish ecology
4 December	Christmas party	



Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra Inc.

Who are the Field Naturalists?

The Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra (FNAC) was formed in 1981. Our aim is to foster interest in natural history by means of meetings and regular field outings. Meetings are usually held on the first Thursday of each month. Outings range from weekend rambles to long weekends away. Activities are advertised in our monthly newsletter. We emphasise informality and the enjoyment of nature. New members are always welcome. If you wish to join FNAC, please fill in the member application below and send it in with your subscription to the FNAC Treasurer at the address below.

President: Rosemary von Behrens Ph: 6254 1763

Email: fieldnaturalist@yahoo.com.au

Website: under construction

All newsletter contributions welcome.

Email to the Editor at alison.milton@health.gov.au

Editor



Monthly meeting venue: Division of Botany and Zoology, Building 116, Daley Rd, Australian National University. (The Xmas meeting is at the adjacent building 44 and will start at the earlier time of 6:30 pm.)

Field Naturalists' Association of Canberra
GPO Box 249
Canberra ACT 2601



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Family name: First name:

If a family membership, please include the first names of other members of the family:

.....

Postal address:

Suburb: State: Postcode: Home phone:

Work phone: Email address:

Subscription enclosed: \$.....(Single/Family \$25) Donation: \$.....

How did you hear about FNAC? Please circle: FRIEND? OTHER? Please specify: